

Bohlke has passed out information on that, I did, indeed, say that I would feel comfortable with LB 658 if, indeed, it would accomplish that kind of savings. If you vote to suspend the rules so, indeed, this very different proposal could be inserted into 658, and the original 658 be deleted, then I would hope that that would mean, indeed, that you do support this proposal, and with that, I do support this proposal. I think it is something that we need to do, and so I will urge you to suspend the rules so we can, indeed, insert the gun-free school zones into LB 658. Thank you.

SENATOR HALL: Thank you, Senator Pirsch. Senator Withem, your light is next.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Yes, I am going to speak very briefly on this motion, indicating I will not be in support of the motion to suspend the rules. I had been hopeful that we would be able to reach an agreement around one or two different approaches on dealing with the gun-free school issue. My first preference would have been for us to have revisited some of the issues that this Legislature addressed last year when this Legislature passed LB 1250. It was our...it was our attempt to rewrite the school discipline code in which we did provide a one-year expulsion for students with firearms and violent sort of altercations, weapons of any kind, in some ways it may be stronger than what the federal government is requiring us to do. My first hope was that we could have reached agreement to finish the cycle on that bill along with what Senator Bohlke is asking us to do on LB 658. My definition of closing the cycle would have been to have required school districts to provide alternative educational experiences. We put that in the bill last year with an encouragement by the Legislature that those types of programs exist. The response from the school community to that suggestion and encouragement has been underwhelming at best. In essence, their response to their members from the school associations has been ignore that provision, you don't have to do it. The other would have been to deal with an amendment that we foolishly made, as sponsors of LB 1250, by removing the word "violent" from the force stipulation which would have led to a one-year suspension. Since then we have seen ludicrous situations in the city's largest school district where children have been removed, eighth grade students have been removed from school for a full year for circumstances around which they should most certainly have been punished, but certainly were not the kind that the one-year expulsion should